

[27 February, 2001]

RAJYA SABHA

GANGWAR): (a) to (c) Allotments of two retail outlet dealerships and three LPG distributorships to widows/next of kin of Defence personnel killed in action in 'OP Vijay' (Kargil) who belong to West Bengal, have been approved by Government so far. Out of these, two retail outlet dealerships and two LPG distributorships have been approved for allotment to the widows/next of kin belonging to Darjeeling district.

Observation of CAG on overpayment made to Oil Companies

659. SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether in the C.A.G. Report it has been observed that Ministry and OCC allowed overpayment/undue benefits of Rs. 6,321 crore to oil companies;

(b) whether the report had indicated that OCC gave undue benefit to the oil companies by allowing them to retain LPG cylinder deposit;

(c) whether the above observations were taken into account while projecting the oil pool deficit;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor;

(e) whether any relief will be given to the consumers in view of the observations; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) and (b) The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (C&AG) in its Report No. 2 of 2000 (Civil) has observed that during the period 1993—98, oil companies were allowed certain unintended benefit including retention of LPG Cylinder Deposit by oil companies.

(c) Compensation payable to the oil companies have been determined as per the Government decisions applicable to administered pricing mechanism from time to time. The observations of C&AG have been examined by the Government and replies thereto have been referred to C&AG for their vetting.

(d) to (f) Do not arise in view of (c) above.

Joint venture abroad by oil companies of India

660. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Indian oil companies are involved in joint ventures with foreign countries in exploration and production abroad;

(b) if so, what are the details of these schemes and the benefits that accrue from them; and

(c) the reasons for not deploying these resources to increase exploration and production at home?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) and (b) ONGC Videsh Ltd. (OVL), wholly owned subsidiary of ONGC has a participating interest of 45% in the Block 06.1 Gas Project in Vietnam, with the other partners, *viz.* British Petroleum of UK, Statoil of Norway and Petrovietnam of Vietnam. OVL has signed an agreement with Rosneft, the national oil company of Russia in 10.2.2001 for acquisition of 20% interest from Rosneft on Sakhalin-I offshore project in Russia. This will help in acquiring equity oil from abroad of about 2—4 million metric tonnes per year and its share in gas would be 5—8 million standard cubic metres per day, from 2005-06. OVL is also pursuing exploration and production opportunities in Algeria, Iraq, Kazakhasthan and Venezuela. Besides, Oil India Ltd. has taken 20% participating interest in a Block in Oman with TOTAL of France for exploration of oil and gas.

(c) Considering the widening gap between demand and supply of oil and gas, acquisition of equity oil from abroad is an important plank of the strategy to achieve oil security. This is in addition to efforts to increase exploration and production in the country.